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DOCKET NUMBER FR-30, 32, 70, 150
PROPOSED RULE (45 FR 70874)
SMELTED ALLOYS

3437

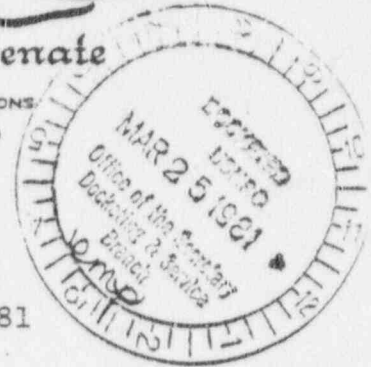
United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE PR-205
(45 FR 67018)

352

February 26, 1981



Mr. Carlton C. Kammerer
Director
Office of Congressional Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

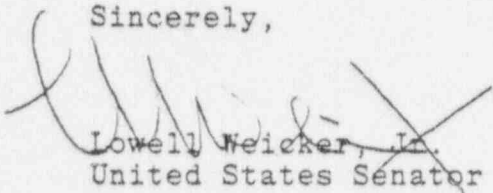
Dear Mr. Kammerer:

Enclosed is a letter from Mrs. Patricia Smith together with her comments on a letter to the New York Times regarding certain NRC policies.

I would appreciate your response to the Johnsrud letter.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,


Lowell Weicker, Jr.
United States Senator

LW:jg

Enclosure (2)

8105050/61

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS
POOR QUALITY PAGES

L-4-1, Pt. 30

Laddins Rock Rd.
Old Greenwich Conn.
06870

December 22, 1980

Dear Senator Weicker,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from the New York Times, Saturday, Dec. 20th, regarding a Nuclear Regulatory Commission plan for changes "in its regulation of low-level radioactive waste disposal that may set a precedent for future distribution of large quantities of contaminated materials without licensing, monitoring or any follow-up studies of possible consequences for public health."

That the NRC can do what suits them, including making regulation changes with no regard for public health - adults and children's lives - is wrong.

I strongly object to what the NRC proposes to do, and to their dangerous irresponsibility.

The NRC should not make the

decisions which affect the health of
the public.

1980 DEC 29 PM 9:15

yours truly,
Mrs. Patricia Smith

Letters

An N.R.C. Plan to Allow Just a Little More Cancer

To the Editor:

In recent weeks, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has, without fanfare, proposed certain changes in its regulation of low-level radioactive waste disposal that may set a precedent for future distribution of large quantities of contaminated materials without licensing, monitoring or any follow-up studies of possible consequences for public health. To our knowledge, the press has not been made aware of the implications of these proposed changes, and we believe that your readers may wish to submit comments to the N.R.C. and to elected officials.

The Oct. 8 Federal Register (45 FR 67018) proposes to deregulate certain medical and research wastes and permit their disposal in sewage systems and sanitary landfills. Liquid scintillation media containing tritium (with a half-life of about 12 years) and carbon-14 (with a half-life in excess of 5,000 years) in an organic solvent (toluene, which is highly toxic) would be deregulated, conserving some 400,000 cubic feet of licensed low-level waste disposal space for other radioactive wastes.

At present use rates, some 200,000 to 400,000 gallons of contaminated material are involved, 43 percent of the volume of low-level radioactive wastes from medical and research sources. In addition, animal carcasses containing

small quantities of tritium and carbon-14 could be discarded in community landfills.

These two changes would reduce the costs of radioactive disposal by an estimated \$16 million per year for the licensees.

A second Federal Register notice, on Oct. 27 (45 FR 70874), clarifies beyond any doubt the intent of the N.R.C. to "solve" the troublesome low-level radioactive waste problem by deregulation, dispersion, dilution and diffusion.

In it the commission proposes to allow the recycling of metals contaminated with technetium-99 (half-life, 210,000 years) and low-enriched uranium from the Department of Energy's gaseous diffusion plants. Contaminated scrap copper, iron and nickel would be permitted to be smelted and mixed with uncontaminated materials from other sources for subsequent use in all manner of consumer articles.

Appliances, toys, furniture, cars, coins, cooking utensils, machinery and construction materials are cited by the N.R.C. as possible consumer items that would be permitted to contain low-level radioactive contamination. The commission expresses some concern about "health effects" on foundry workers but concludes that the damage to the public would be "de minimus," which is an N.R.C. term mean-

ing "very small if no one bothers to look for any damage."

A Draft Environmental Statement by the N.R.C. (NUREG-0518) stresses the financial savings that would result from this perverted form of conservation of scarce resources. Public comments on the draft will be received until Dec. 22.

Once established, such a policy of "dispersion and dilution" for solid low-level radioactive wastes would be readily extended to other contaminated materials from the nuclear power industry, not just medical, research and weapons-related radioactive wastes. It would pave the way for classifying other "low-level" but nonetheless dangerous radioactive materials as "safe enough for the landfill" or as "recyclable scarce resources."

There would then never be a comprehensive assessment of the impact upon people and their environment, because no one would be able to trace these contaminants. Just a little more cancer. A few more defective children.

This is grossly improper regulation, which wholly violates both the mandate of the Atomic Energy Act to protect the public health and safety and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

JUDITH H. JOHNSRUD
Co-Director, Environmental
Coalition on Nuclear Power
State College, Pa., Dec. 9, 1980